

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RANGOO 00862 110819Z

ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, BM

SUBJ: HIGHLIGHTS OF INAUGURAL HLUTTAW SESSION

REF: (A) RANGOON 0749, (B) RANGOON 0790, (C) RANGOON 0781

1. THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE SECOND PYITHU HLUTTAW, BURMA'S RUBBER STAMP PARLIAMENT, ENDED ON MARCH 7 AFTER SITTING LESS THAN ONE WEEK. THE 464-MEMBER UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE, ELECTED LAST JANUARY, BEGAN ITS SECOND FOUR-YEAR TERM UNDER THE 1974 CONSTITUTION ON MARCH 2.

2. OF MAJOR POLITICAL INTEREST WAS THE ELECTION OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE, WHOSE CHAIRMAN, NE WIN, AUTOMATICALLY STARTS ANOTHER TERM AS BURMA'S HEAD OF STATE; THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (CABINET, REPORTED REF B); THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S JUSTICES (SUPREME COURT); THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S ATTORNEYS (ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE); COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S INSPECTORS; AND THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES OF THE HLUTTAW.

3. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, A PROJECTED BUDGET SURPLUS OF KYAT 31.4 MILLION WAS REPORTED FOR BURMESE FY 1977-78, WHICH ENDS MARCH 31. (KYAT 7 EQUALS US \$1.00 AT THE OFFICAL RATE OF EXCHANGE.) THE HLUTTAW APPROVED THE FY 1978-79 BUDGET, WHICH APPEARS TO PROJECT AN OVERALL DEFICIT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 15 MILLION KYATS.

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ALSO, THE THIRD FOUR-YEAR ECONOMIC PLAN (1978-82) WAS APPROVED AND A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY WAS SUBMITTED. THE REPORT INDICATES THAT GDP HAS GROWN AT AN AVERAGE RATE OF 3.7 PERCENT DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS AS AGAINST A TARGET OF 4.5 PERCENT. THE EMBASSY WILL SUBMIT REPORTS ON THE BUDGET AND THE ECONOMIC PLAN WHEN MORE DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE.

4. IN AN APPARENT EFFORT TO ALLEVIATE THE CONTINUING PROBLEM OF OFFICIAL CORRUPTION, THE HLUTTAW ADOPTED A RESOLUTION REQUIRING ALL ELECTED MEMBERS OF STATE ORGANS AT ALL LEVELS TO MAKE A DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL WORTH TO THE COUNCIL OF STATE.

5. COMMENT: THIS SESSION WAS RATHER SHORT COMPARED TO PREVIOUS HLUTTAW MEETINGS, ESPECIALLY FOR AN INAUGURAL SESSION. SINCE MOST OF THE KEY MILITARY COMMANDERS ARE ALSO HLUTTAW MEMBERS, IT POSSIBLY WAS NOT CONSIDERED ADVISABLE TO KEEP ALL OF THEM IN RANGOON FOR A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME BECAUSE OF SECURITY CONCERNS (SEE REF C) AND A REPORTED INCREASE IN TEMPO OF COMBAT AGAINST THE INSURGENTS.
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Message Attributes

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